

Shaken Baby Syndrome

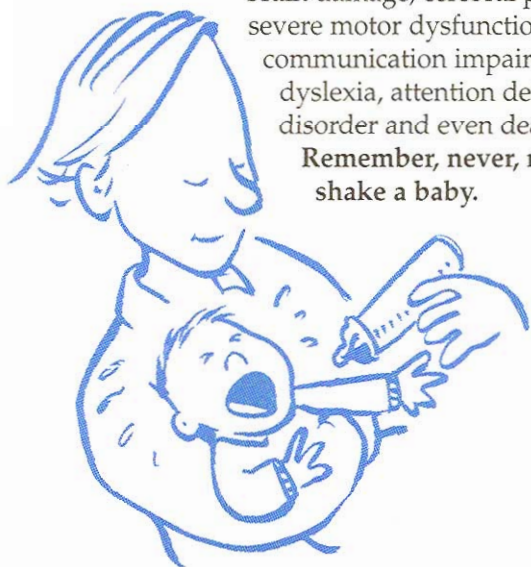
It is 2:30 am and your newborn baby has been crying non-stop for hours. You have tried everything. You have changed, burped, fed the baby and she's still crying. You may be feeling frustrated and lonely because you have not had a good night's sleep in weeks. If only the crying will end! Where can you turn? Who will listen to you? What can you do?

All families are faced with a situation like this at some point with their infants and toddlers. If you find yourself feeling desperate and alone, **remember never, never shake your baby.**

The ultimate message to remember is that at times when you are angry and frustrated, shaking your baby can change your life and the life of your child forever!

Even mild shaking for a few seconds can cause these devastating effects: blindness, permanent brain damage, cerebral palsy, severe motor dysfunction, communication impairment, dyslexia, attention deficit disorder and even death.

Remember, never, never shake a baby.



Tips for quieting a crying baby

- Meeting your child's basic needs is the first thing you need to do. Is the baby sick? wet? Too warm? Too cold? Lonely? Thirsty? Hungry? Does your baby have a fever?
- Talk softly or sing to the baby.
- Place the baby in a safe, secure place, take deep breaths and count to 10.
- Ask someone else to watch your baby for you – a friend or a neighbor.
- Take the baby outside for some fresh air, a ride in the stroller or in the car in the car seat.
- Wrap the baby in a warm, soft blanket and offer a pacifier.
- Make sure the baby's clothing is loose enough and that toes and fingers are not bent.
- Gently rock or give the baby a bottle.
- Gently tap or rub the baby's back while the baby is lying on its tummy on your lap.
- Shake, rattle or play with a noisy toy in front of the baby.
- Let the baby watch the two of you in a mirror.
- If nothing else works, it is okay to place the baby in a secure crib, close the door, and go to another room for 5 to 10 minutes. You can calm down, watch TV, listen to music, and check on the baby after a few minutes have gone by. You might be amazed because the baby may even fall asleep!
- Remember, it is okay to ask for help. We all need a break sometime! For support or help, call your pediatrician, 1-800-CHILDREN (1-800-244-5373.)



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